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**STRATEGIC PLANNING PRACTICES, ENTREPRENEURIAL
ORIENTATION, ENVIRONMENTAL UNCERTAINTY AND
INTERNATIONALIZATION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM
ENTERPRISES**



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By

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**Dissertation submitted to
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business
Universiti Utara Malaysia in partial fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration**

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ABSTRACT

The understanding on factors contributing to internationalization of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia is still lacking, and that the SME contribution to the country's export is still small compared to those neighbouring countries and most of the developed countries. Therefore, the objective of this study is to empirically test the relationships between strategic planning practices, entrepreneurial orientation, and environmental uncertainty on the internationalization of SME's in Malaysia. This study emanated from the fact that there is limited study in this area and more research should be conducted especially in the context of Malaysia. Based on the theoretical consideration a model was proposed and hypotheses were developed. Survey questionnaires were used in the data collection and a total of 250 useable responses were received from the exporting SMEs in Malaysia. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was employed in the data analysis. The findings revealed that strategic planning practices and entrepreneurial orientation have significant and positive relationships with the internationalization of SMEs. The results further found the moderating role of environmental uncertainty in the relationships between strategic planning practices and internationalization as well as between entrepreneurial orientation and internationalization of SMEs. These findings also support the resource based view which emphasizes the importance of internal capability of a firm as an influenced driver in achieving export performance and competitive advantage. Thus this study sheds some light on an understanding and evaluation of the relationship between strategic planning practices, entrepreneurial orientation and environmental uncertainty on the internationalization of SMEs in Malaysia. Finally, the study concludes with some theoretical and practical implications as well as the limitations and directions for future research.

Keywords: Small and medium enterprises (SMEs), strategic planning practices, entrepreneurial orientation, environmental uncertainty, internationalization

ABSTRAK

Kefahaman tentang faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada pengantarabangsaan perusahaan kecil dan sederhana (PKS) di Malaysia masih berkurangan, dan sumbangan PKS kepada eksport negara masih di tahap yang rendah berbanding dengan negara jiran dan kebanyakan negara-negara maju. Oleh itu objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk menguji secara empirik hubungan-hubungan antara amalan perancangan strategik, orientasi keusahawanan dan ketidakpastian persekitaran ke atas pengantarabangsaan PKS di Malaysia. Kajian ini juga dilakukan kerana masih wujud kekurangan kajian dalam bidang ini dan lebih banyak kajian perlu dijalankan khususnya dalam konteks Malaysia. Berdasarkan keperluan teori satu model telah dicadangkan dan hipotesis-hipotesis dibangunkan. Soal selidik tinjauan digunakan untuk memungut data dan sejumlah 250 maklum balas boleh guna diterima daripada PKS yang terlibat dalam pengeksportan di Malaysia. *Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model* (PLS-SEM) telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan amalan perancangan strategik dan orientasi keusahawanan mempunyai hubungan positif dan signifikan dengan pengantarabangsaan PKS. Dapatan kajian seterusnya mendapati ketidakpastian persekitaran menyederhana hubungan di antara amalan perancangan strategik dengan pengantarabangsaan, dan di antara orientasi keusahawanan dengan pengantarabangsaan PKS. Dapatan ini menyokong pandangan berasaskan sumber yang menekankan kepada kepentingan keupayaan dalaman sesebuah firma sebagai penggerak untuk mencapai prestasi eksport dan kelebihan persaingan. Justeru, kajian ini memberi pendedahan kepada kefahaman dan penilaian tentang hubungan antara amalan perancangan strategik, orientasi keusahawanan dan ketidakpastian persekitaran ke atas pengantarabangsaan PKS di Malaysia. Akhir sekali kajian ini dirumuskan dengan implikasi teoretikal dan praktikal beserta dengan limitasi dan arah kajian pada masa hadapan.

Kata Kunci: Perusahaan kecil dan sederhana (PKS), amalan perancangan strategik, orientasi keusahawanan, ketidakpastian persekitaran, pengantarabangsaan

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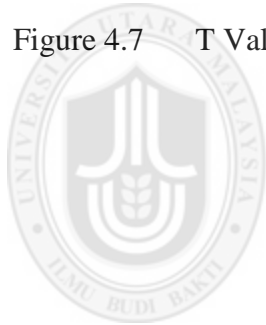
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The importance of Small and Medium enterprises (SMEs) in economic developments has been established in almost every country in the world, and in particular Malaysia where the role of SMEs has long been recognised as a major contributor to the nation's economy and plays as major contributor to employment and social growth. Over 50 per cent of total workforces in Malaysia were actually provided by SMEs, in which SMEs accounted for about 99.2 per cent of total business establishments (Singh & Mahmood, 2014). However, the overall contribution to the economy was only 33 percent of the Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and 19 per cent of exports (Bakar, Mahmood & Ismail, 2015; Singh 2013). This contribution of SMEs to the GDP is relatively low when compared with developed countries and other developing nations such as Japan (53%), Germany (53%), United Kingdom (51%), Korea (49%), Singapore (49%), Vietnam (45), Thailand (38%), Indonesia (58) and Philippines (36%). Under the SME Master Plan 2012 – 2020, SMEs have been targeted to contribute 41 percent of GDP (ERIA, 2014).

In terms of exports, SMEs contribution is still relatively low, and the exporters are mainly in the manufacturing sector (57.6%), services (40.6%) and agriculture

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